

Message Text

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CINCPAC 25 APR 74 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 2504

NCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, AF, US, IR, UR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN - QUARTERLY ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY: PRINCIPAL AFGHAN DEVELOPMENTS IN LAST THREE MONTHS
HAVE BEEN: (1) SLOW CONSOLIDATION OF DAOUD'S CONTROL OF THE
GOVERNMENT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE YOUNG LEFTISTS AND PARCH-
AMISTS WHO CAME INTO POWER WITH HIM LAST JULY; (2) UNUSUALLY
ACTIVE FOREIGN POLICY, STRESSING AFGHANISTAN'S NONALIGNMENT
AND AIMED AT ISOLATING PAKISTAN IN THE REGION AND IN THE
MOSLEM WORLD; (3) CONTINUING ECONOMIC STAGNATION, INCLUDING
LACK OF INITIATIVES ON DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS OR
INCENTIVES TO PRIVATE INVESTMENT. WE EXPECT DAOUD TO CONTINUE
TO STRENGTHEN HIS CONTROL AND AS HE DOES SO TO DEVOTE MORE OF
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HIS ATTENTION TO ECONOMIC MATTERS, BUT WE EXPECT THIS PROCESS

TO BE A SLOW ONE BECAUSE DAOUD IS STILL CONCERNED ABOUT AROUSING OR COALESCING OPPOSITION. WE CAN EXPECT MORE OF THE SAME IN FOREIGN POLICY, ESPECIALLY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND IRAN. US-AFGHAN RELATIONS ARE ON AN EVEN KEEL IF NOT PARTICULARLY ACTIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOREIGN POLICY: AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS BECOME MORE ACTIVIST AS GOA PURSUES ITS EFFORTS TO REALIGN REGIONAL PATTERNS AND STRESS ITS NONALIGNMENT BY MOVING AWAY SOMEWHAT FROM OVERSHADOWING INFLUENCE OF SOVIET UNION. IN FACT, WE ARE WITNESSING GREATER NUMBER OF INITIATIVES THAT HAVE PROBABLY EVER TAKEN PLACE IN FOREIGN POLICY FIELD (CREDIT IS POSSIBLY DUE IN PART TO EX-PRIME MINISTER SHAHIQ WHO BEGAN PROCESS OF MORE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF GOA WITH OTHER COUNTRIES; BUT DAOUD, UNDOUBTEDLY WITH THE COUNSEL OF HIS BROTHER NAIM, HAS DRAMATICALLY EXPANDED THESE ACTIVITIES). LAST FALL'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT NIXON ASKING HIM TO EXERT EFFORTS TO END ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, LETTERS TO IRANIAN AND IRAQI LEADERS TO END BORDER HOSTILITIES, AND NAIM'S RECENT TRIP TO FIVE ARAB COUNTRIES ARE INDICATIVE OF NEW DAOUD/NAIM ACTION-ORIENTED POLICY. BUT KEY FOCUS ON REGIME'S FOREIGN POLICY IS PAKISTAN, AND GOA HAS BEGUN INTENSIVE EFFORT TO CULTIVATE CLOSER TIES WITH INDIA AND IRAN IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO ISOLATE PAKISTAN. DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA ALSO PROVIDES ALTERNATIVE TO ALMOST TOTAL RELIANCE ON SOVIET TRAINING AND SUPPLY.

A. INDIA: DAOUD REGIME'S INITIATIVE WITH INDIA WAS BEGUN SOON AFTER HE ASSUMED PRESIDENCY AND HAS INVOLVED VISITS TO INDIA BY NAIM AND TO KABUL BY SWARAN SINGH AND HIGH-LEVEL INDIAN MILITARY TEAM. WHILE THE INDIANS HAVE ONLY A VERY MODEST MILITARY AID POTENTIAL (MAINLY IN THE FORM OF TRAINING AND TECHNICIANS), THERE WOULD SEEM BE MUTUAL ADVANTAGE IN PURSUING IMPROVED RELATIONS. AS WE SEE IT, INDIAN INFLUENCE HAS SO FAR BEEN ON SIDE OF MODERATION AS CONCERNS PAKISTAN AND PAKISTAN.

B. PAKISTAN: WHILE DAOUD'S POLICY TOWARDS PASHTUNISTAN HAS NOT INCREASED IN MILITANCY SINCE JANUARY, HIS INTERVIEW WITH PAK JOURNALIST IN MID-APRIL REVEALED NO GIVE OR SOFT SPOTS
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IN POLICY. PAZHWAK'S HARD LINE ON PASHTUNISTAN AT LAHORE SUMMIT CONFERENCE WAS NOT WELL RECEIVED BY ARAB LEADERS; CONSEQUENTLY, DAOUD SENT HIS BROTHER NAIM AND DEFOONMIN WAHID ABDULLAH ON TOUR OF MAJOR ARAB COUNTRIES (MARCH-APRIL) TO SEEK UNDERSTANDING OF AFGHAN VIEWPOINT AND COUNTER PAKISTANI "PROPAGANDA." THIS IS PROBABLY MOST DRAMATIC INITIATIVE OF DAOUD/NAIM AS WE CANNOT RECALL ANY SIMILAR SPECIAL MISSION FROM AFGHAN CHIEF OF STATE TO ARAB COUNTRIES.

C. IRAN: AS INTERESTING AS GOA'S EFFORT TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA IS ITS CURRENT EFFORT TO DRAW CLOSER TO IRAN. DAOUD HAS OBVIOUSLY DECIDED THAT GOOD AFGHAN-IRANIAN RELATIONS ARE NECESSARY, AND HE HAS WASTED NO TIME IN IMPLEMENTATION. TRANSIT TRADE AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED FOLLOWING DEFFONMIN ABDULLAH'S END OF YEAR VISIT; AND NAIM AND ABDULLAH ARE SCHEDULED TO VISIT TEHRAN IN EARLY MAY. EFFORT IS BEING MADE ON BOTH SIDES TO PLAY DOWN HELMAND WATERS PROBLEM IN INTEREST OF DEVELOPING BROADER TIES, AND ABDULLAH HAS EVEN BEEN TALKING OF A JOINT AFGHAN-IRANIAN IRRIGATION DAM ON THE HELMAND NOT FAR FROM IRANIAN BORDER WHICH COULD CONTROL FLOOD WATERS AS WELL AS ALLOW NECESSARY FLOW DURING DRY SEASON. AFGHANS ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN OTHER PROJECTS IN ECONOMIC FIELD AND IN AN IMPROVED POLITICAL CLIMATE WHICH MIGHT, IN AFGHAN EYES, LESSEN IRANIAN SUPPORT OF PAKISTAN SHOULD PASHTUNISTAN QUARREL HEAT UP. WE DOUBT DAOUD WILL HAVE MUCH SUCCESS IN LATTER SPHERE ALTHOUGH ECONOMIC PROJECTS MAY BE DEVELOPED IF GOA CAN FIGURE OUT WAY GRACEFULLY TO ACCEPT IRANIAN LARGESSE.

D. USSR: THERE DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ANY MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHAN/SOVIET RELATIONS ALTHOUGH THERE ARE PROSPECTS FOR NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SEE BELOW). SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES CONTINUE TO ARRIVE IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS WITH 56 TANKS (23 T-62'S AND 33 T-55'S), 32 BTR 152 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND 36 MIG-17 AIRCRAFT KNOWN TO HAVE ARRIVED DURING MARCH AND APRIL.

3. PRC: SINCE THE GENERAL COOLING OF AFGHAN/PRC TIES NOTED IMMEDIATE AFTER THE COUP, THERE HAS BEEN NO EVIDENCE OF ANY WARMING; NOR DO WE SEE ANY BASIS FOR PREDICTING ANY IMPROVEMENT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. TRADE AGREEMENT SIGNED APRIL 21 APPEARS TO BE ROUTINE STEP.

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F. US: RELATIONS WITH US HAVE REMAINED CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY AT HIGHER LEVELS BUT CONSTRAINED AT SOME WORKING LEVELS AS AID/PC/USIS PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT. NEW AID LEGISLATION WILL REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN BILATERAL AID PROGRAM CONTENT OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS WITH MAJOR EMPHASIS ON PEOPLE-ORIENTED PROJECTS WHICH HELP POOR WITH MARKED DE-EMPHASIS ON CAPITAL PROJECTS. THIS WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO WORK THROUGH. OVERALL RELATIONSHIP REMAINS FIRM, AND WILL, WE BELIEVE, SLOWLY IMPROVE IN WORKING LEVELS OF MINISTRIES AS DAOUD INCREASINGLY EXTENDS HIS PERSONAL, DIRECT AUTHORITY. IN THE MEANTIME, WE CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE MINOR HARASSMENTS, ENDING OF SOME US PROGRAMS (AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE, SOME PEACE CORPS PROJECTS, PRIVATE MEDICAL PROGRAMS OUTSIDE KABUL, AND RELUCTANCE OF EVEN MOST FRIENDLY AFGHANS TO HAVE VISIBLY

CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS.

2. DOMESTIC POLICY:

A. DAOUD'S POSITION: PR

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